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THE LITTLE GENT.

It is not often that I find myself within the precincts of a police court, but a short time ago, happening to be seized with a sudden and unaccountable curiosity, I went my way toward one of those interesting institutions and effected an entrance.

I say effected, because it was a matter of no little difficulty, the entrance and hallways being crammed to inconvenience with forty or fifty individuals, mostly women, two-thirds of whom seemed in the last stages of despondency, while the remainder afforded contrast by exhibiting a sort of unhealthy cheerfulness.

The court policeman on duty that day was an old acquaintance of mine, and upon noticing me, he immediately beckoned to me.

"There's a peculiar case just decided," he said; "one you might like to know something about. The fellow is discharged, and will be coming out in a minute. Why, here he comes!" ejaculated the officer, "that man in the shaggy suit."

The "man in the shaggy suit" had only just got into the street when I overtook him.

He was standing still, looking up and down the thoroughfare, apparently undecided what to do all the time feeling in his trousers' pocket as though he had lost something. I divined his thoughts, and, accosting him quietly, said:

"After the unpleasant proceedings just concluded, perhaps a little light refreshment might be acceptable."

"Just what I was thinking, sir," he replied, smiling; "and I was just a-feeling to see if I'd got the price of a schooner of beer, but I find I'm quite broke."

"Never mind," I observed, and in less than a couple of minutes I had him comfortably seated at a table in a neighboring beer saloon.

He was a fine specimen of the workingman, tall and broad-shouldered, with a frank, open face—not at all one who could be judged as belonging to the criminal classes.

I was anxious to know what crime he had been charged with, and I mildly inquired if it had been a matter of "assault and battery."

"No, sir," he said; "but it will be next time—that is, if I lay hold of the chap that made a fool of me."

"Is it a long story?" I queried.

"Not very long. Would you like to hear it, sir?"

I assented eagerly.

"But 's'pose," I said, as soon as I could get a word in, 's'pose a regular policeman comes along and catches sight of me in those grounds at midnight?"

"Well," the little gent replied, laughing, "you've only to give the police signal, three loud whistles, and tell them Detective Dawker has engaged you."

"I was rather doubtful even then, but the little gent's quick tongue soon smoothed it over, and I agreed to go in for a share of the reward."

"We left the saloon together and parted just outside, promising to meet at the house he had described to me, on Washington Heights, at twelve o'clock the same night."

"He cautioned me again not to breathe a word about the arrangement, and further mentioned that when he met me at night he would be disguised."

"Twelve o'clock came. I reached the meeting place on time, and found the detective waiting for me."

"He dressed in clothes resembling like my own, and looked the flash gentleman no longer."

"He seemed rather impatient, and hastily pulled me into the garden and into a part of it where thick shrubs grew, making a capital hiding-place, from which you could look up and down the street quite plainly without being visible yourself."

"Now, mind," he said, quickly, "if you see the burglar run, chase him; if a policeman comes, give three loud whistles. I must be off, or I shall lose my chance. I shall be back in an hour. If I want assistance I will give you the three whistles."

"With these parting words the man disappeared."

"I stood waiting there for quite half an hour, I should think, when I heard on the right a heavy tramp of a policeman."

"He was coming my way, I fancied, and I was right."

"Slowly he drew nearer and nearer, until he stopped right abreast of the very place where I was hiding, close to the garden gate."

"He put his hand and tried the gate fastening. It opened; he came inside and flashed his lantern full on the very bush behind which I was standing."

"Quick as possible I gave three loud, shrill whistles, but instead of the policeman being awed by the sound he dashed at me and caught me by the throat, in about half a minute nearly choking me, and stopping me from explaining why I was there."

"Finding I didn't resist, he loosened his hold and questioned me."

"I told him plump and plain that Detective Dawker had engaged me—that I was doing my duty and that he had not better spoil my game."

"He only gripped my arm the tighter and laughed, telling me not to 'try it on him,' and blew his whistle."

"In a few minutes another officer arrived, and between the two of 'em, what, with their laughing and their questions, I had a lively time of it."

LEARN TO WALK.

A Grace That Needs Cultivation in America.

An observer at Saratoga notes the lack of proper training in the modulation of the voice and in correct pronunciation on the part of most of the women who crowd the fashionable summer resorts. To this might be added a very general failure to acquire an easy and graceful walk and bearing. While there are finishing schools without number where it is supposed that some attention is paid to these matters, it is a fact that unless an American woman is naturally graceful in her movements she is condemned to be awkward and stiff or "starchy" in spite of the ease with which this may be overcome. Perhaps it arises from excessive self-consciousness. Certainly that is at the root of the apparent seriousness or melancholy, or else the hysterical animation of our women, who are so to advantage only in the privacy of their homes.

The vivacious and exclamatory French visitors to the World's fair were struck by the sedate and almost sad bearing of American crowds in the Midway. The purpose of this annex to the great show was to provoke hilarity, but it was a dismal failure as far as the Americans were concerned. In public we are like the English, of whom old Froissart wrote: "They take their pleasures sadly, after their fashion."

We are self-conscious, and each of us has found it difficult or impossible to get rid of the delusion that we are the observed of everybody, and that the chief occupation of the world is to comment on our appearance and behavior. There are few sedate Americans, most of a look of silliness, or we are too vivacious to a palpably artificial degree and frequently rude. At home we are found to be, particularly the women, amiable and naturally cheerful and bright. A stranger taking his first ride in a crowded street car would declare Americans to be morose and dull and cold blooded people, or else, on seeing the hysterical young woman or the woman whose artificial animation is associated with a loud voice and who talks for the benefit of the crowd, he would regard us as vulgar. Americans are not any of these things, but simply the victims of neglect.

Without being made obviously and aggressively artificial, the American woman can be made graceful and sufficiently dignified without losing every appearance of amiability. It is no more natural to walk after the manner of St. Vitus, with jerkiness, which is a common fault with American girls, than with a graceful swing. It is certainly no more difficult to acquire a free and charming walk than the walk which seems to dislocate the hip joint, and which was highly popular among school girls a few years ago. Something has been gained for tall and long limbed women by the tragical-sartre walk, but it is not adapted to young women who are most in need of training, and who carry themselves as though they are on two jointless sticks and are in constant haste.

It is well worth while for the young woman to pay a good deal of attention to her walk. Also to the modulation of her voice and to her pronunciation. Both of which are neglected by school instructors. The American girl has brains, high ideas, a sense of humor and good nature, besides the distinctly domestic virtues. Almost her sole faults are those we have mentioned, and they are easily corrected.—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

WHEELS IN THE ARMY.

Great Increase in Bicycles for the Armies of Europe.

The use of bicycles in all the armies of Europe has been enormously increased during the last two years. In Holland members of the various bicycle clubs who have already attained their twenty-first year and are proficient in their art are invited to join the army under certain advantageous conditions. The number of posts offered is seventy-five. The candidates are paid fifty guilders a year for the wear and tear of their machines, are given the rank of corporal, and presented with a uniform to be worn during service. When upon duty the bicycles are allowed five guilders a day. From the 1st of March to the 30th of April they receive instruction twice a week from an officer in military affairs. The candidates have to bind themselves to be ready during a space of five years to be called out at any moment by the war minister, and also to attend maneuvers for at least three weeks every year. At the end of the first five years they can enter on another term of five years. These arrangements are said to have met with great success in Holland, and it is probable that the number of military bicyclists will shortly be increased.

In Portugal bicycles have been introduced in the army, and have met with much success. They were proved in the great maneuvers which took place at Tancos to supply a want long felt. In Spain bicycle instruction in the infantry and rifle corps now forms a specialty. Money prizes are offered to the best riders. In time of maneuvers the bicycles are used for the carrying of dispatches, posts, etc. In Bulgaria, since 1893, to every six divisions a bicycle corps, consisting of one non-commissioned officer and eight men, is told off.

In Denmark a certain number of recruits undergo a course of instruction in bicycling. In France, since 1893, at least two men in every regiment are told off for bicycle work. Sweden, for some years, has paid particular attention to the use of bicycles in military service. The velocipede corps wear infantry uniform, and are armed with revolvers. To every division ten men are told off to belong to this corps, and are specially instructed in fore-post duty, reading of military maps, and in the surveying of roads, bridges, etc.—London Globe.

Peach stones find a ready market in New York. Perfumes, flavoring extracts, and prussic acid are distilled from them.

MEANING OF ANTIQUE.

The Word Defined by the United States Customs Officials.

There are many curious features of customhouse law. Some of them are in the statutes, others have been established by the decisions of the courts or the practice of the treasury department. The common law of England has been known for three hundred years as "the perfection of reason." A good deal of the present customhouse law of the United States might be well called the perfect of eccentricity. An instance was brought out a few days ago when the officers seized a valuable collection of old English silver plate, which Mr. J. R. Willis, the London representative of R. Hoe & Co., sent over as a gift to Mr. Hoe. Mr. Willis knew that the collections of antiquities were on the list, and this was a collection of antiquities he invoiced the plate accordingly.

But the customs officers discovered that some of the plate was produced later than 1700. Mr. Willis did not know that anything manufactured in 1699 is antique, in view of the customs laws, but that an article just like it and equally incriminated with the marks of age, but made in 1701, is modern. How this distinction grew up is a good illustration of how customhouse law is made.

Eight years ago Mr. Matthis H. Arnot, a wealthy citizen of Elmira, purchased a lot of paintings by old masters at the sale of the duke of Hamilton's great collection. The customhouse disputed his entry of the lot as antiquities, and Mr. Arnot contested the matter in the courts. The question was settled by an agreement between the lawyers that the pictures which dated further back than 1700 should be classed as antiques, and those of later date as modern and dutiable.

Secretary Fairchild, during his headship of the treasury department, accepted the precedent, and incorporated it into the unwritten law by a decision establishing 1700 as the line of demarcation between antique and modern, and the McKinley bill it was enacted into law.

Another obstacle which many private citizens have encountered in purchasing antiquities under the supposition that they were safe in the protection of the free list is the fact that it is only collections of antiquities that are free. Single antiquities have to pay duty. A Union square firm had an experience of this kind when they imported the celebrated Mexican sun and said to put in their exhibit at the World's fair. The firm bought this in London, and entered it as an antiquity, but found that as it was alone a duty of several thousand dollars had to be paid. If any cheap bit of trash made before 1700 had been brought in with it there would have been no duty.—N. Y. Mail and Express.

THE COWBOY'S LASSO.

With It He Is Almost as Good a Marksman as with the Rifle.

The cowboys of New Mexico, Texas and Arizona are all skilled in the art of using the lasso, and a Santa Fe man recently "I used to be in the ranching line myself, and once thought I could throw a rope as straight as any man living. But that was before I had mixed to any extent with the Mexicans. As good as the American cowboys are, they can't hold a candle to a granger when it comes to the roping business. They can do things with hemp that no other mortals can ever hope to accomplish. As the Australian stands out pre-eminently in throwing the boomerang, so does the ignorant son of the 'land of God and Liberty' excel all other men in this one accomplishment."

"A Mexican will chase a steer at full speed, and while he guides his broncos with one hand whirl his rope with unerring aim with the other, and it isn't once in a thousand times that the noose will fail to catch just where the rider meant. A favorite trick with them is to stick a lot of long-handled knives in the ground close together within the limits of a narrow circle and bet with outsiders that they can ride over, that each one pick up any one of the knives designated with a rope. They are good marks-men with the rifle, too, but in this regard the cowboys are fully their peers."—Washington Post.

His Favorite Color.

Old Mr. Kerr-Muggeon, who agrees with George II. in hating "poetry and painting," and who is never agreeable except when he is smoking, was engaged in this favorite amusement on his doorstep when Mrs. Gusscher passed.

"O Mr. Kerr-Muggeon!" she said, "I am glad to see you enjoying the beauties of nature."

"Heh? What d'ye mean?" asked Mr. Kerr-Muggeon.

"Why, weren't you looking at the sunset?"

"The sunset! Well, no, not just exactly. But now that you mention it, it does look fine, don't it? Looks a good deal like a meerschaum pipe just after it's begun to color!"—Youth's Companion.

The Coming Struggle.

Boy—Pop, can't you get me a bicycle, and buy one for yourself, too, if you don't want to get left.

Pop (in politician)—What's got into you?

"Look out for the B. P. A., that's all."

"Heh? What's that?"

PITH AND POINT.

—It is all very well to tell a violent man to "keep his temper," but is he not better off without it?

—He—"Has your father been vaccinated yet?" She—"No, he is going to 'tomorrow.'" He—"Tell him to have it done on the foot."—N. Y. Sun.

—At the Hatcher's—"Why did you put up that large mirror near the door?" "To prevent servant girls from watching the scales."—Fliegende Blätter.

—Wilton—"So Penner's latest novel failed to catch the public as he expected it would. Any particular reason?" Walton—"Er—it was a detective story."—Boston Courier.

—Lawyer—"Did he call you a liar in so many words?" Client—"Well, he called me a weather report." Lawyer—"That is sufficient; you are sure to get damages."—Tit-Bits.

—"How did you come to break with Miss Sweetlips? You always said she was good as gold." "Yes, but I got acquainted with a girl who had the gold."—Boston Transcript.

—Summitt—"Miss Gayley seems thoroughly imbued with the idea that youth will tell." Bottom—"Yes; you see, she has three or four small brothers."—Buffalo Courier.

—Mr. Manhattan—"Do you wear ear-muffs in Boston when it is very cold?" Mr. Buncker Bill—"Certainly we do." Mr. Manhattan—"Then the streets can not be so very narrow after all."—Siftings.

—Physician—"You must avoid all excitement, avoid beer or wine entirely, and drink only water." "But, doctor, the idea of drinking water excites me more than anything else."—Fliegende Blätter.

—"What is the matter with Fido that you are watching him so closely?" Charlie—"Gee, mamma said your hat was enough to make a dog laugh, and I wanted to see him do it."—Inter-Ocean.

—Jimmy—"What is this moral courage that the Sunday-school teacher was telling us about?" Tommy—"As near as I kin guess it, it's the kind of courage that kids has that's afraid to fight."—Indianapolis Journal.

—"You don't know how much your book has helped me, Mr. Scribbles." Mr. Scribbles—"You flatter me." "I mean every word of it. Whether I am restless I go get your book and inside of fifteen minutes I'll be asleep."

—Patient (complainingly)—"I can't make out a word of this prescription, doctor." Physician (grimly)—"Never mind. You'll find my handwriting perfectly legible, I'll warrant you, when I send in my bill."—Somerville Journal.

—On the Road—Manager (reading)—"The egg product of the United States amounts to eight hundred and fifty million dozens." Old Actor (reflectively)—"I've thought sometimes it was more than that."—Detroit Free Press.

—"You don't seem to get along very well with your old friend." "Naw. He got ter thinkin' he knowed too much. When I told 'im he order put his mind in a gymnasium an' give 'is voice a vacation, he got mad."—Washington Star.

—Eligible Millionaire—"I wonder why a girl always shuts her eyes when—er—a fellow kisses her." Fair Aristocrat—"I never noticed anything of the sort, but I suppose it depends upon the kind of face the fellow has."—Picks-Me-Up.

—Rambler—"That Bartlett girl thinks a great deal of me. When I told her I was going around the world, she asked me to be sure and write her from every place I visited." Witter—"Yes; she is collecting postage stamps."—N. Y. Sun.

—Will—"Why do you always carry those corks with you when you go to call on your fiancée?" Jack—"Well, you see, she lives in a flat, and I use them for stopping up the speaking tubes when I am bidding her good-night in the vestibule."—N. Y. Herald.

ORIGIN OF THE DIAMOND.

The Opinions of Two Scientists Who Differ on the Question.

As usual upon disputed points, speculation has been busy about the origin of the diamond, and a number of theories, all more or less probable, have been propounded to set the matter at rest. The two most reasonable expositions are, perhaps, the explanations put forward by M. Parrot and Baron Liebig.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE BOY AMONG HIS BLOCKS.

Building a castle fine,
With terrace, tower and wall,
And turrets that so brightly shine
Above the shadows tall;
But see! it aways, falls, past all cure,
For, ah! the base is insecure!

Foundations must be firm
For superstructure's need;
They will stand the longest term
When built on noble deed.
Such character, my boy, will stand,
And grow, and life's wreck, more grand.
Anne E. Thomas, in Harper's Young People.

BRUIN'S QUEER HABITS.

Curious Facts Regarding the Black Bear's Winter Sleep.

One of the most curious things about the black bear (and the grizzly and cinnamon also) is the way he goes into snug winter quarters when winter has fairly set in, and lies dormant in his den without either eating or drinking until the next spring. This is called hibernation; and during this period the ordinary processes of digestion seem to be entirely suspended. In our semi-tropics bears do not hibernate, but nature undoubtedly planted this instinct in the brain of the bear of the north to enable him to survive the severe winter period when the snows lie deep, and all food is so scarce that otherwise he would be in danger of starvation. This period of hibernation is from about the middle of December to the middle of March. It has been stated that if bears have plenty of food they will not hibernate, even in the north, but this is a mistake. I know of at least two instances wherein bears in captivity have "holed up" in December and remained dormant until



HEAD OF A BLACK BEAR.

March, in spite of all temptations of offered food. The natural instinct was so strong that it refused to be overcome by appetite alone.

There is another very curious thing about the hibernation of the black bear. His den is usually a hole dug under the roots of either a standing tree or an uprooted tree, but it may be in a hollow tree, a hollow log, or more frequently, a miniature cave in a rocky hillside. Sometimes he makes a bed of leaves and moss for himself, but often he does not. In "holing up" under the roots of a tree he is frequently completely smothered in, and under such a condition, the warmth of his breath keeps the snow melted immediately around him. This moisture freezes on the inside of his den, and presently he is incased in a dome of snow, lined with ice, the hard lining of which ever grows thicker from the frozen moisture of his breath. As a result, he often wakes early in March to find himself a prisoner in a hollow dome of snow and ice, from which he cannot escape for days, and where he is often found self-trapped, and shot without the privilege of even striking a blow at his assailant. And there is where nature serves poor Bruin a mean trick. I have never seen a bear in such an ice cage of his own building, but Dr. Merriam has, in the Adirondacks, and this information is borrowed from him.—W. T. Hornaday, in St. Nicholas.

The Habits of the Walrus.

Although the walrus is a formidable-looking animal, especially when he rears his huge head and gleaming tusks out of the water within a few feet of your boat, Mr. Elliott says he is not only timid, harmless and inoffensive, but not even given to fighting in his own family. His tusks, which vary in length from twenty to thirty inches, and in weight average from six to eight pounds each, were given him to dig use to him either in fighting or defending himself from attack. He sleeps comfortably in the open sea, floating bolt upright in the water, with his nostrils out and his hind flippers hanging a dozen feet below. Nature purposely built him in the shape of a buoy, so that when sleeping or resting at sea the buoyancy of his huge, blubber-covered forequarters brings his nostrils out of the water without the slightest effort on his part. He grunts and belows a great deal, solely for his own amusement, apparently, and many a time have vessels been warned off dangerous rocks in thick, foggy weather by the grunting of the walrus lying upon them.—St. Nicholas.

A Circus Trick Recently Occurred.

At a town in the south of France, during the visit of a circus. One of the chief attractions of the show was a troupe of performing dogs, and, after they had gone through various feats, their trainer announced that Azor, the most accomplished of them all, would favor the audience with a piano-forte solo. Accordingly Azor mounted the chair and struck up the "Marseillaise." At this moment some one in the audience shouted "Rats!" and Azor made one bound in the direction of the cry. This created great laughter, which doubled when it was noticed that the piano went on playing, thus revealing the trick that had been perpetrated.

An Unfortunate Affair.

"I'm not consoled," quoth the fly
Upon the pantry shelf.
"But squire I struck this lemon pie
I'm sick upon myself."
—Harper's Young People.

ABOUT FISHING TACKLE.

How to Mend a Rod and Snell Instead of Throwing Them Away.

One of the first things a young fisherman must learn is to do everything neatly. A bungling boy will be apt to scare away game fish. Some prefer plain hooks on this account, as they can be fastened to the line more neatly than hooks with eyes. If possible, have a silk line rather than a linen one. It will not cost much and is stronger and firmer than linen. Always take along a bit of shoemaker's wax and a spool of stout silk, red or white being the best colors. If your fisherman's kit can be further provided with a pair of pliers and a vial of asphaltum varnish, so much the better. Many fishermen use hooks attached to snells or lengths of gut. The diagram given in Fig. 1 shows the best way of attaching the loop at the end of the snell to the line. It is most easily done when fastened in this way. Put a knot in the extreme end of the line (a), pass it through the loop of the snell (b—b) and proceed as in diagram, drawing snell and line tight to make the knot fast. Well, suppose you are out for a day's fishing and your snell breaks, as it usually does, just where the hook is fastened to it. Do not throw them away, but scrape the shank of the hook clean or take a fresh hook. Soak the snell in water about ten minutes to soften it. Hold the hook with the left hand, or with pliers, take the silk, well waxed, and twist it several times about shank of hook, as seen in Fig. 11, between a and b. Lay end of gut along the shank over the top of the snell, reversing the direction, without the silk firmly around all (Fig. 11), whipping it closely and evenly along, and pulling the silk tightly at each twist, occasionally shoving the twists closely together with the thumb nail or knife. Continue the twisting about half an inch, then make a loose loop (Fig. 11), c, lay the slack end (Fig. 11), b of the silk along the outside of the snell. Continue the wrapping for three or four twists outside of c, slipping the loop (d) over hook each time, then draw tightly and cut off all loose ends. Rub this wrapping well with wax, smooth down with a knife handle and cover with waterproof varnish. If this is properly done, the joining is stronger than it originally was. If no varnish is handy the hook could be used for a day without it. As gut and hooks can be bought separately cheaper than the tied hooks, preparing them all in this way will save pocket money. Watch the tying and revarnish when necessary. Keep an eye also on the snell and wrappings and repair or replace them when they appear at all worn, or else you may lose a big fish some day.

If the gut should break at the head of the loop, soak it until soft, lay it back on itself a sufficient distance to form a new loop and tie in a common knot, cutting the short end off.

When a rod breaks out the broken ends slantwise, being careful to make these ends fit together as in Fig. IV.

Glue them in that position, or if there is no glue handy use wax. Whip silk over in even coils until they more than conceal the break, proceeding exactly as was done in Figs. II and III, until the final fastening. Lay a pencil or the finger along the coils (Fig. V, a—b), insert the silk over all three times, wind end under last coils, as shown in Fig. V, c, remove pencil, draw close and cut off the end of the silk. Rub smooth and cover with shellac varnish.—N. Y. Advertiser.

Methuselah of the Horse World.

The latest Methuselah story comes from England. This time it is not from a man who has a distinct recollection of Napoleon's grandfather, or an old, old lady who witnessed the execution of Charles I. or nursed the Infant Cromwell, nor yet does this story tell of a devoted couple, who arm in arm, have wandered down the path of time together since their wedding day, the same day that George Washington's father and mother were married, and are now about to celebrate their platinum wedding. This time the hero is a horse, and a very grand-fatherly old horse, too. He belonged to the Morsey & Irwell Navigation company, but left their employ recently and embarked for the happy hunting grounds at the green old age of sixty-two.

But Was He Really a Man?

A newspaper funny man has invented not an absolutely fresh, but a comparatively new joke upon a very old subject. Miss Timid was talking about her own nervousness and her various night alarms.

"Did you ever find a man under your bed, Mrs. Bluff?" she asked.

"Yes," said that worthy woman.

"The night we thought there were burglars in the house I found my husband there."

The Youngest Sea Captain.

The youngest sea captain in the coasting trade is believed to be Mark L. Gilbert, who runs the schooner Adeline Wessels between Rockland, Me., and New York. He is only seventeen years old, but has followed the sea since he was ten years old, having been mate for his father for two years.